

into effect, I think, has been soundly defeated by the comments from the Congressional Research Service and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY). The fact of the matter is that if they had the facts, they would argue the facts, and they do not. If they had the law, they would argue the law, and they do not. So obfuscation is the rule of the day, and that attempt has now been put to rest. The people that the new rule would help, this amendment allows it to help. The people that it would harm and the confusion there is, is set aside by this amendment. So the only true course and the fair course to take at this point in time is to bring us all back to the House to set a good set of rules that protect the American worker and try to help out in this economy when things are so difficult and people are experiencing a squeeze.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the Obey-Miller amendment. For 70 years, overtime pay has meant time and a half in this country. It has allowed the employee some flexibility to make some extra cash to put a roof over their family's heads, to buy groceries, to pay their medical bills. And without overtime, countless Americans, including some police officers, firefighters, nurses, EMTs, would be forced to take a second job to make up for the lost earnings, meaning more time away from their families and higher child care costs.

Absent this amendment, 6 million workers, some earning as little as \$23,660, will lose their right to overtime pay. I might just add at this moment this is pretty much in keeping with what this administration is about when they have denied the child tax credit to those families that make from \$10,500 to \$26,500. So they are in keeping with trying to continually put people who are making these wages in a very difficult economic position. The rule changes that we are talking about here that went into effect in August are designed to give companies the authority to withhold rightfully earned pay by their employees by weakening the 1938 Fair Standards Labor Act, protections that safeguard our workers' rights today and make mandatory overtime a less attractive option for the employer.

This paves the way for mandatory overtime, this at a time when we have more than 8 million Americans out of work, when income is declining, poverty is increasing, and 45 million Americans are without health insurance. This is an administration who says, with 8 million people out of work that they will not extend unemployment benefits. Historically, on a bipartisan basis when we have experienced significant unemployment in the United States, we have extended those benefits. But in talking some to folks at the Department of Labor, they have said that the reason why they will not extend those benefits is because if we do

it, these workers will not go out and look for a job. It gives us some idea of what kind of an opinion and view that this administration has for those who work for a living. Would that they would walk in the shoes of working men and women in this great country of ours.

To those who would argue that these rules expand overtime protections, I point them to a report by three of the highest-ranking career Department of Labor officials in the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations, which found that all but one of these changes to the overtime rules take away workers' overtime rights.

Mr. Chairman, this is a matter of values, of our country's longstanding contract with working people that says hard work deserves to be rewarded. That is bedrock, that is what this Nation is built on, and yet this is an administration that will reward wealth but not work. That is what the Bush economy is all about. And these hard workers need to be rewarded especially when that work is above and beyond the call of duty after normal working hours.

That contract must be honored, and I urge my colleagues to support the Obey-Miller amendment.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, for over half a century, the rules governing overtime pay eligibility have been pretty clear, and eligible employees are paid time and a half for every hour of work more than 40 hours in a single week. This, in fact, is a landmark in modern economic history.

I ask my colleagues to support the Obey amendment to stop the rollback of these rules, to stop these rules that would hurt American workers and their families. Make no mistake about it, this anti-overtime rule is a major step backward in the fight to reward work. I consider it an attack on the middle class that will lead to greater economic inequality.

Families all across America in all sorts of job categories depend on overtime pay to make ends meet. The families that will lose overtime protection will find that they have to work longer hours for significantly less money. Overtime pay accounts for approximately a quarter of the income, more than \$8,000 a year for families who earned overtime in 2000. As the pool of workers who are exempt from overtime is expanded, those workers who are not directly affected by the regulation will lose income as their opportunity to work overtime is diminished. This is consistent with what the majority has been doing in so many other areas, pushing compensatory time instead of pay, refusing to implement a living wage, and failing to extend unemployment benefits. They will say they are being compassionate, that, by their way of thinking, paying the workers less will make it easier for the employers to hire more workers and therefore more people will be paid.

This is bogus economics. This was debunked a century ago when it was shown that Henry Ford, by paying his workers more, he actually raised the economic activity. Claiming that lowering wages will somehow help working families ignores a century of economic understanding. It is a shame that at the same time the majority leadership is proposing to eliminate overtime pay for millions of workers, they are enacting huge tax breaks for the wealthiest 1% of Americans. Both proposals hurt hard-working middle class families.

Let me tell my colleagues, if we take away this overtime pay, these families will again be given the short shrift.

I urge my colleagues to support the Obey amendment.

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I found it very interesting that one of my colleagues earlier from the Republican side said this is about election-year politics and that is why we are doing it. Okay. Let us talk about election-year politics. In an election year, the American people get to evaluate what the current administration, the Bush administration, has been doing and ask the fundamental question: Are you better off today than you were 4 years ago? For millions of Americans, the answer is clearly no.

Under the Bush administration's leadership, our country has lost 1.7 million jobs. Wages have not kept pace with inflation. The new jobs that are being created, and there are only a few of those, do not pay as much as the jobs that are being lost to outsourcing, and the number of jobs being created does not even keep pace with the number of people who are entering the workforce.

The Census Bureau reported that the median household income has dropped over \$1,500 in real terms since President Bush took office, while the number of persons living in poverty and without health insurance increased for the third straight year to 45 million people. So, yes, this is an election year, and certainly this is a time to talk about the economy in terms of the lives of the American citizens.

This administration, to add insult to injury, now brings before us a proposal which would cut 6 million people from earning overtime. I think that is offensive. They will say that it will add more people. That is fine, and Democrats are happy to support any addition to the people who are eligible to earn overtime, but the question before us today, the question that is at the heart of the Obey-Miller amendment, is whether or not we ought to keep in place language from this administration that would cut 6 million people off the overtime list, keep them from earning critical overtime.

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Let us see who we are talking about in this election year. Workers who are likely to see their pay cut by virtue of not being able to earn overtime include